

T/SOR/6/1/1/2

HOW WE MIGHT SPEND OUR MONEY

- more or less minimal requirements to operate as we do at present, but with increased numbers

(Based on forty children)

Salary for four full-time teachers-	4 x £20 per week x 52 weeks	£4160
Renovation of the building (paint, hardboard, security screens, glass, screws, nails etc.)	our own labour	£ 120
Books, paper, art materials, pens, math equipment etc.	minimum provision for each	£ 200
Tape recorders	2 at £20	£ 40
Tapes	10 at 50p	£ 5
Typewriter	second hand (£15?)	£ 15
Weekly rent	52 x £5	£ 260
Heating, electricity etc		£ 120
Bus fares	For visiting resource places, trips, frequent excursions into town etc.	£ 200
TOTAL for one year		<u>£5100</u>

OTHER ITEMS WE WOULD LIKE

Ideally a dozen portable tape recorders as we use them frequently, one large good quality tape recorder.

A radio, useful for school broadcasts and regular broadcasts to be taped

A record player, useful for languages, plays, music etc.

A television, very useful for school and other programmes

A minibus, to enable us to take day or weekend trips, or for use for a small group doing a study during the school day out of the area.

An overhead projector

One or two cameras, ideally half a dozen with facilities more than simply instamatics. Developing and printing equipment to allow us to develop our own films.

As mentioned previously we are being registered as a charity. This enables donors to obtain tax relief on gifts. We are in a position which is such that we welcome any sum no matter how small, and any of the above items, new or second-hand would be greatly appreciated.

Our school address is: Barrowfield Community School,  
1 St. Marnock St.  
Glasgow G40

### Legal status

We are provisionally registered with the Scottish Education Department as an independent school.

### Finance

Our most difficult problem is finance. We are optimistic that with financial support we could do great things. We would like to have enough to afford to pay four full-time teachers and enrol forty children. We would like to be able to buy some books, tape recorders, records, a typewriter, maybe even a television or a minibus. We have added a tentative budget for a year's operation.

At the moment we have £165 in the bank. Some of this is money raised by the parents who have contributed money from a discotheque they run, some of it is money raised by selling pens, or from individual donations and covenants. £100 of it is a donation from the Elmgrant Trust in Devon. We have been promised a further £400 from the same source as soon as we register as a charity. We are at present having the necessary papers drawn up.

We cannot put it strongly enough that we welcome the smallest donation, and that our hopes are founded on a sum large enough to guarantee our security for a year ahead. We would like to be able to prove that we have something really worthwhile to offer to education.

### "What the papers say"

"In a derelict decrepit part of Glasgow off the Gallowgate, this 28 year old teacher is fighting to save some of the city's children from their fate of being born to fail...Operating from a disused taxi office, with just eight pupils from the Bridgeton district, Brian is providing an alternative to apathy... Brian is unpaid; so are the six part-time teachers who come and teach the pupils. They have to be - straight educationalists have no time for experimentalists." (Daily Record, November 8th)

"As politicians argue the relative merits of private and state schools we find what must be Scotland's most remarkable private educational establishment." (Scottish Daily Express, Oct. 15th)

"The Barrowfield Community School should not be seen as the only possible alternative; what is right for some is not necessarily right for all. One key to this issue is the idea of responsibility, in this case the responsibility of adults and pupils to devise, or at least seek, viable solutions to what they perceive as problems. In contrast to the free school stereotype the Barrowfield school is strongly committed to help children to meet competition, not to avoid it. This hard-headed approach need not negate either the community aspect of the school, nor the admission that none of the participants has all the answers. The point is rather that they are searching together." (Times Educational Supp. July 20th)

"The style of possible alternative which surfaced recently in Glasgow is Barrowfield Community School which dispenses with those aspects of formal education which alienate the disadvantaged. It is not the first of its kind - people have been fumbling for a formula for a long time. What makes such a venture viable is the successful engagement of parents and pupils in their own school.

What seems essential is to find a formula whereby such experiments can be supported within the state system...but Barrowfield depends on donations for its survival. Harassed officials trying to make the existing system work may have little time for those who are seeking alternatives. Our ethic accepts that alternatives shall be available for parents who can pay for them but not for those who cannot until their offspring have fallen foul of the law." (Scottish Educational Journal, November 2nd.)



For other children their individual time-table may mean a day or two a week on a farm, with the local plumber, in the zoo, Transport Museum, making meals for old-age pensioners, taking two days for a trip down to England with a long-distance lorry driver.

This is where the services of part-time teachers or anyone else volunteering their services, is invaluable. We think all education should be individualized, but at the same time we do not undervalue the importance of getting together sometimes as a group to share ideas, problems, and experiences.

- f) grading, selection etc. It is perhaps redundant to add that the school has no meritocracy, grading, marks etc. We do not underrate the place of evaluation of work done, nor the differentiation of good from bad. We simply feel we do not need the support of letter grades, gold stars or prizes but that instead we would like to wean our pupils away from motivation which relies on getting more stars or better marks than someone else, to be replaced by taking pride in good work, helping others to do their best as well, and deriving the intrinsic satisfaction to be gained from a job well done.

If in all of this we seem to strike too pious a note, remember that we are human and fallible and probably as liable to gild the lily as anyone, and that sometimes what we write on paper sounds smoother, glossier and better than the rather tattered way it seems to work out in practice.

If you come and visit us you will see a not too prepossessing building, second-hand furniture given to us by well-wishers or recovered from the scrap heap, books that have seen better days and come from similar sources, and kids whose dress, manners and speech are not always redolent of the best finishing schools. This is the reality behind the theorizing. Nevertheless those of us who have been with the six children from the start have noticed overwhelmingly and beyond our expectations a change in their relationships with us, with each other and with other adults. They are certainly more confident, more articulate, more sensitive, and more knowledgeable. Above all we think they are more responsible. For children who have previously been the delinquents of the school, the truants, the "problems" to be given a key and told to let themselves in and get on with the work in itself marks a great leap forward. There is no such concept in our vocabulary as vandalism, discipline or punishment. They have already become redundant ideas because this is a school that belongs to the pupils and they enjoy it. When they stop enjoying it it is time for us all to examine where we have gone wrong.

### The teachers

Our "staff" consists of:

Full-time: Brian Addison B.Sc. with teaching certificate in mathematics and technical subjects.

Part-time: John Sperber M.A. with teaching certificate in primary subjects, completing final year in Diploma in Educational Psychology.

Mary Macaulay with Diploma in Primary Education

John MacBeath M.A. M.Ed. with teaching certificate in primary and secondary subjects. Lecturer in Education, Jordanhill College.

George Kee B.Sc. M.Ed. with teaching certificate in primary and secondary subjects. Lecturer in Education, Jordanhill College.

Ron Lumsden D.A. completing teaching certificate in Teaching of Art.

b) language, values  
and "culture"

We are not convinced by much of the rhetoric of free schools which opposes decadent middle-class values with a romanticized image of the working-class. We do know that many of the values apparently espoused by schools are alien to the kind of children we are dealing with, and we are convinced of the futility and ineptness of punishing certain language, behaviour and values, and the attempted imposition of "better" ones.

We have accepted the way children in Barrowfield speak, the values they hold and the kind of behaviour they evidence. We are people with our own values and convictions and they do not always match with those of our pupils. That lack of match and the ensuing dialogue we consider a very integral part of the educational process. We do consider it part of our function as educators to extend their horizons to consider other life-styles, other values and other behaviours. We believe we can do this in a non-doctrinaire and non-threatening way. We believe also that this is a two-way process and we have learnt a great deal from our pupils, and adjustments made in living and learning together must not always necessarily be adjustments on their part.

c) the teacher in the  
community

We believe it is pretty important that teachers live in the community where they teach, at least in this kind of school, or any kind of school which attempts to extend beyond a number of prescribed hours in the week, or beyond a number of prescribed areas of study. Brian Addison lives in the school itself, and other teachers we have already "waiting in the wings" to start as soon as finance is forthcoming have agreed to move into the area. The part-time teachers do not live in the area for a number of personal or logistic reasons.

d) the parents

We regard as one of the single most important differences between our school and others which our pupils have attended is the support and commitment of the parents. The parents do not perceive us in the same way that they perceive "teachers" - frankly as rather alien beings. We have found that natural and easy relationships follow from what has already been said about language, values, living in the community, and the role that the teachers assume.

It might be said that we provide education on the parents' terms, but that is not altogether correct. Since we do not always agree with the parents on educational theory or practice there has to be a continuing dialogue to resolve what parents want and what we want to, or can, provide. This is in one sense parental education, but in another education for us, finding as we do that we can't have all the answers and that parents are not always ignorant of them as is so commonly assumed.

e) the curriculum

We find it difficult to resolve the exigencies of national certificating bodies and the kinds of experience we regard as educative. We would like to have the freedom to strike out along all kinds of interesting tangents, and explore further ideas and experiences that we come across. We would like to operate in the fashion of some of the most interesting primary schools where children become immersed in projects and studies of their own devising, and follow perhaps esoteric interests into some depth. Unfortunately, we have not found, or still have to be convinced, that operating in this way brings in its wake heightened chances of success in O level or Higher exams.



All of us having been teachers in more conventional schools, are aware of the unhappy reality that success in those insidious national examinations means a great deal of "training" in techniques and probabilities, and that for the typically disadvantaged child that is a hard and rigorous road that leaves little time for the more educational experiences.

So we are forced to a dichotomy between "training" and "education". We would be happier if O level exams did not exist, but given that they do we feel it incumbent on us to give our children the best possible chance of success in them - an even better chance than their peers in state schools for like them many of their peers have been "written off" by schools as far as O level chances are concerned. Thus a certain portion of the week we allot to specifically training in the kinds of knowledge and skills required by O level exams, and try as much as possible not to divorce this from being an educational experience as well.

Hopefully in Scotland in the not too distant future we will have the flexibility of the C.S.E. exams which allow schools to build their assessment in a much more integrated way into the educational experiences they offer.

We believe the truly educational aspects of the school life begin with opportunities for personal development and enrichment, and the extension of one's imaginative, linguistic and conceptual vocabularies. Our most immediate resource in which real learning can take place is the area of Barrowfield. The way of life in the community, the business interests, the social services, the political situation, the history, the economics of the area, provide an excellent starting point from which we may move to a study of the city of Glasgow, the country as a whole, and to the anthropological view of ourselves and other cultures. To borrow a phrase from Jerome Bruner we might call our curriculum "Man-A Course of Study"

We believe as well that we cannot devise a common course, or develop a curriculum for all, but that we have to take the much more painful and time-consuming path of devising educational experiences for each individual child and translating this into an individual time-table for each.

In practice this means that child A, for example, may spend Monday working in a restaurant, Tuesday in the school on follow up work in marketing, economics, and the other aspects of the catering trade. Some time on Tuesday there will be an hour or two for close individual tuition perhaps in Mathematics or Reading (two areas most urgently in need of work, but not necessarily in isolation from the restaurant context which demands a fair level of both skills). On Wednesday there will be work with the rest of the group or part of it on a community project, interviewing the firemen about their strike for example, or talking to local tenants about the area and its problems. Wednesday afternoon may be spent in the local Corporation nursery school working with pre-school children and learning to appreciate their needs and ways of dealing with them. On Thursday morning there is work on the alternative syllabus for O level history, in the afternoon more individual tuition - perhaps creative writing, more mathematics. In the evening on Thursday there is a class in shorthand and typing. Friday is spent in the local chemist's shop learning about the retail trade, about public relations, or putting mathematical expertise to the test.





welcomed its one full-time teacher and only 5 pupils for the first time there were literally no resources of any kind, no seats, or tables or books, but a group of children eager to work together to create their own school.

The first weeks up until the summer holiday were spent in renovating the building and establishing contacts with local tradesmen and businesses to ascertain in what way the school could benefit and derive benefit from them. Pupils made contacts with the local playgroup, and the old-age pensioners in the area, and a number of people volunteered their services to the school.

Over the summer holidays it appeared as if the school's short life might come to an end as Christ Church Trustees discovered that to allow their hall to be used as a school drastically affected their status vis-a-vis local rates etc. and the school pupils and teachers also felt they could find more suitable and permanent accommodation. It was not until the beginning of September, however, that a new building was discovered and school started the new session with a frantic attempt to bring the building up to the firemaster's specifications, and make it habitable, and conducive to working in.

In September when the school opened in its new premises, a flat of three rooms above a taxi firm's canteen in St. Marnock St., there were six pupils, one full-time and five part-time teachers. The number of pupils has now grown to ten and will continue to increase as funds become available. There are a number of teachers interested in teaching part-time without pay, and a few wishing to teach full-time but needing at least a minimum salary to be able to do so. We feel that while part-time teachers have a lot to offer we would like to have a nucleus of two or three full-time teachers to provide the sustained individual contact which the pupils require and to be present in the area as problems arise, and be a resource in times of need. To this end Brian Addison has made one of the school rooms into his own home base and is available in the evenings and at weekends.

#### What kind of school is it?

Having outlined what we consider the alienating features of "traditional" schools, it is perhaps incumbent on us to explain how Barrowfield Community School attempts to avoid those pitfalls.

- a) size      We hope that given some source of finance the school will grow to about 40 pupils or so. We regard this as about the maximum size tolerable before a school begins to lose the advantages of close personal relationships, and begins to rely on institutional supports, rewards, sanctions, and so on. We do not think that a school of 2,000 is necessarily inworkable. We simply think it would be unworkable for us and the children we have. With 40 pupils we would hope for a minimum of four full-time staff.

With the total school size kept down to this level and the teacher-pupil ratio no more than 10-1, we think it is possible to involve all children in school meetings at which we can formulate school rules, or work out our problems and make decisions about the future. We feel quite secure in the belief that we need no hierarchies or bureaucracies in a unit of this size. We can be a community that is small enough for us to "sort things out" among ourselves. Our first and second hand studies of schools in England and America suggests that when they increased their size beyond a certain point they had to fall back on many of the supports and constraints they had originally abandoned and lost that important face-to-face identification of the "nuclear school".

### Our patrons

Without the backing of any authority we have solicited the support of a number of well-known people sympathetic to our cause and willing to advocate it. They are:

Brain Jackson	Director, Cambridge Educational Development Trust.
Ian Lister	Lecturer in Education, University of York.
Virginia Makins	Deputy Editor, Times Educational Supplement.
Don Myers	Director of International Education, State University of New York.
R.F. Mackenzie	Headmaster, Summerhill Academy, Aberdeen.
Diane Cilento	Actress
Michael Duane	Honorary Lecturer, Garnett College, London.
John Aikenhead	Headmaster, Kilquhanity House, Castle Douglas.

and until his recent death, A.S. Neill of Summerhill.

### The history of the school

In June 1972 a community worker from the Barrowfield area contacted John MacBeath, a lecturer in Jordanhill College, on behalf of the Tenants' Association. Many of the parents in the area were concerned at the high incidence of truancy in the area, and were interested in examining the possibilities of a community-run or "free school" such as they had heard about in Liverpool, London and elsewhere. At the meeting arranged, Brian Addison, a student at College at that time expressed interest in working in Barrowfield with these children.

The seed of an idea was planted at that meeting and germinated until October 31st when Brian Addison, John MacBeath and George Kee (also lecturing in Jordanhill College) visited Barrowfield and initiated discussions with local community workers and parents.

From then on, after the first positive decision to act, the idea gathered momentum, and a number of local people expressed interest in the idea. So began the process of getting to know the people in the area, discussing if and how an independently run school could work, and making approaches to various authorities to determine whether they could give support to such a venture.

Although sympathetic, neither the local authority nor Jordanhill College could finance the project. By this time, those involved had come to see the immediacy of the need, and set about trying to find suitable premises for the school, contacting firms and individuals willing to offer help or support. The first project was to renovate the old jail in the Gallowgate, and work started on cleaning-up, renovating and drawing-up plans for the adaptation of the building. As work progressed it became apparent that this would require thousands of pounds to bring it up to acceptable standards and the idea was abandoned, or at least suspended.

Meanwhile the school started operation in Christ Church hall at the end of May 1973. It began as a leap in the dark for the parents, the children, and for Brian Addison in particular since to this point there were no funds forthcoming for books, materials, salary etc. The parents, however, voted to dealy no further and get the school under way. The only resources were the area, its considerable problems, and the dedication of a single full-time teacher and a number of helpers.

When the school opened it was only after months of discussion with parents and children. There had been over the past few months a number of camping trips, treks, day visits, and innumerable evening meetings at which all involved were trying to get to know each other and to thrash out basic questions of how the school would operate, to what extent parents would support it and play an active role, to what degree teachers could meet parental demands. On that day when a bare church hall



# JORDANHILL COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

Southbrae Drive, Glasgow, G13 1PP

Telephone 041-959 1232

If phoning or calling please ask for:

PRINCIPAL

T. R. Bone M.A., M. Ed., Ph.D

Principal

Deputy Principal

Head of School

Head of Department

Head of Year

Head of House

Head of School

Head of Department

Head of School